Once Again, Congressman Joe Sestak Cosponsors and Votes to Strengthen Ethics Rules in Congress

Washington, DC -- On Tuesday, January 23, Congressman Joe Sestak, co-sponsored and voted to strengthen ethics rules in Congress by reforming the congressional pension system.

"Accountability and ethics are a top priority for me," noted Joe. "There simply is not ethics reform strong enough for which I would not support. That is why today I cosponsored bipartisan legislation to deny pension benefits to House members convicted of corruption. No taxpayer should have to contribute a single cent of their hard earned money to any member of the House of Representatives, who engages in serious abuses of power."

The legislation, the Congressional Pension Accountability (H.R. 476), requires that House Members convicted of certain federal felonies related to the performance of their official duties forfeit their Congressional pension. Current federal law only strips pensions in cases of treason and certain espionage-related offenses. Crimes added by this legislation include bribery of public officials and witnesses, offenses related to officers and employees acting as agents of foreign principals, conspiracy to commit any of the above crimes, conspiracy to violate post-employment restrictions statutes, and perjury in falsely denying any of the above.

On January 4th, Joe's first day in office, he also co-sponsored and voted for a rules package which: prohibited lobbyists from paying for trips for Members of Congress or their staffs - with the exception of travel limited to one day/night; banned lobbyists from paying for meals or tickets to sporting/entertainment events; banned the use of corporate jets; and required all House employees to go through ethics training annually. Not included in the rules package were provisions for the creation of an independent ethics body – what some have called a "public integrity office"— to oversee and enforce the new rules. This is the independent body that Joe Sestak supports.

Born and raised in Delaware County, former 3-star Admiral Joe Sestak served in the Navy for 31 years and now serves as the Representative from the 7th District of Pennsylvania. He led a series of operational commands at sea, including Commander of an aircraft carrier battle group of 30 U.S. and allied ships with over 15,000 sailors and 100 aircraft that conducted operations in Afghanistan and Iraq. After 9/11, Joe was the first Director of "DeepBlue," the Navy's anti-terrorism unit that established strategic and operations policies for the "Global War on Terrorism." He served as President Clinton's Director for Defense Policy at the National Security Council in the White House, and holds a Ph.D. in Political Economy and Government from Harvard University. According to the office of the House Historian, Joe is the highest-ranking former military officer ever to serve in the U.S. House of Representatives.

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